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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of :
Silviu Borac :
Application No. 09/852,906 : ON PETITION
Filed: May 9, 2001 :
Attorney Docket No. MENT-060 :

This is a decision on the petition filed August 2, 2005, to revive the above identified application under 37 CFR 1.137(a)[1] or in the alternative under 37 CFR 1.137 (b)[2].

The petition under 37 CFR 1.137(a) is **DISMISSED**.
The petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b) is **GRANTED**.

A Notice to File Missing Parts was mailed July 11, 2001 and set a two (2) month shortened statutory period for reply. Since the maximum period of time obtainable for

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[1]A grantable petition under 37 CFR 1.137(a) must be accompanied by:

(1) the required reply, unless previously filed; In a nonprovisional application abandoned for failure to prosecute, the required reply may be met by the filing of a continuing application. In a nonprovisional utility or plant application filed on or after June 8, 1995, and abandoned for failure to prosecute, the required reply may also be met by the filing of a request for continued examination in compliance with § 1.114. In an application or patent, abandoned or lapsed for failure to pay the issue fee or any portion thereof, the required reply must be the payment of the issue fee or any outstanding balance thereof.

(2) the petition fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(l);

(3) a showing to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that the entire delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(a) was unavoidable; and

(4) any terminal disclaimer (and fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.20(d)) required pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(c)).

[2]Effective December 1, 1997, the provisions of 37 CFR 1.137(b) now provide that where the delay in reply was unintentional, a petition may be filed to revive an abandoned application or a lapsed patent pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(b). A grantable petition filed under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.137(b) must be accompanied by:

(1) the required reply, unless previously filed. In a nonprovisional application abandoned for failure to prosecute, the required reply may be met by the filing of a continuing application. In a nonprovisional utility or plant application filed on or after June 8, 1995, and abandoned for failure to prosecute, the required reply may also be met by the filing of a request for continued examination in compliance with § 1.114. In an application or patent, abandoned or lapsed for failure to pay the issue fee or any portion thereof, the required reply must be the payment of the issue fee or any outstanding balance thereof.

(2) the petition fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(m);

(3) a statement that the entire delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(b) was unintentional. The Commissioner may required additional information where there is a question whether the delay was unintentional; and

(4) any terminal disclaimer (and fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.20(d)) required pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(c)).

an extension of time had elapsed and since no proper reply had been received, the application became abandoned on September 12, 2001. Accordingly, a Notice of Abandonment was mailed October 23, 2003.

PETITION UNDER 37 CFR 1.137(a)

The Commissioner may revive an abandoned application if the delay in responding to the relevant outstanding Office requirement is shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner to be "unavoidable".[3] Decisions on reviving abandoned applications on the basis of "unavoidable" delay have adopted the reasonably prudent person standard in determining if the delay was unavoidable:

> The word 'unavoidable' . . . is applicable to ordinary human affairs, and requires no more or greater care or diligence than is generally used and observed by prudent and careful men in relation to their most important business. It permits them in the exercise of this care to rely upon the ordinary and trustworthy agencies of mail and telegraph, worthy and reliable employees, and such other means and instrumentalities as are usually employed in such important business. If unexpectedly, or through the unforeseen fault or imperfection of these agencies and instrumentalities, there occurs a failure, it may properly be said to be unavoidable, all other conditions of promptness in its rectification being present.[4]

The showing of record is inadequate to establish unavoidable delay within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. § 133 and 37 CFR 1.137(a).[5] Specifically, an application is "unavoidably" abandoned only where petitioner, or counsel for petitioner, takes all action necessary for a proper response to the outstanding Office action, but through the intervention of unforeseen circumstances, such as failure of mail, telegraph, facsimile, or the negligence of otherwise reliable employees, the response is not timely received in the Office.[6]

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[3]35 U.S.C. § 133.

[4]In re Mattullath, 38 App. D.C. 497, 514-15 (1912)(quoting Ex parte Pratt, 1887 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 31, 32-33 (1887)); see also Winkler v. Ladd, 221 F. Supp. 550, 552, 138 USPQ 666, 167-68 (D.D.C. 1963), aff'd, 143 USPQ 172 (D.C. Cir. 1963); Ex parte Henrich, 1913 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 139, 141 (1913). In addition, decisions on revival are made on a "case-by-case basis, taking all the facts and circumstances into account." Smith v. Mossinghoff, 671 F.2d 533, 538, 213 USPQ 977, 982 (D.C. Cir. 1982). Finally, a petition cannot be granted where a petitioner has failed to meet his or her burden of establishing that the delay was "unavoidable." Haines v. Quigg, 673 F. Supp. 314, 316-17, 5 USPQ2d 1130, 1131-32 (N.D. Ind. 1987).

[5]See MPEP 711(c)(III)(C)(2) for a discussion of the requirements for a showing of unavoidable delay.

[6]Ex parte Pratt, 1887 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 31 (Comm'r Pat. 1887).

Petitioner asserts that they were unavoidably delayed from filing a timely response to the Office action due to the attorney of record's failure to take action in this matter, failure to respond to their inquiries regarding the status of this and other patent applications and finally his failure to advise the applicants that this and other patent applications had become abandoned.

In order to establish unavoidable delay, petitioner must demonstrate diligence on the part of the attorney of record in prosecution of the matter.[7] Since petitioners can't say for certain whether the attorney of record exercised any diligence with respect to the prosecution of this application, rather than unavoidable delay and a lack of diligence on the part of petitioner's chosen representative, the facts point more towards negligence on the part of the attorney of record. The series of events outlined in the petition suggest that the attorney of record may have been negligent in prosecuting the application and in failing to inform petitioner that the application had become abandoned.

Unfortunately, however, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office must rely on the actions or inactions of duly authorized and voluntarily chosen representatives of the applicant, and applicant is bound by the consequences of those actions or inaction.[8] Specifically, petitioner's delay caused by the mistakes or negligence of his voluntarily chosen representative however does not constitute unavoidable delay within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. § 133 or 37 CFR 1.137(a).[9]

As petitioner has not provided a showing of evidence to satisfy the requirements of a grantable petition under 37 CFR 1.137(a), the petition will be dismissed.

PETITION UNDER 37 CFR 1.137(b)

This petition, as filed in the alternative under 37 CFR 1.137(b), is granted.

As the present petition was filed and decided under both 37 CFR 1.137(a) and (b), counsel's deposit account, No. 12-2315, has been charged in the amount of $500 for the unavoidable petition and $1500 for the unintentional petition.

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[7] See Douglas v. Manbeck, 21 USPQ2d 1697, 1700 (E.D. Pa. 1991), aff'd 975 F.2d 869, 24 USPQ2d 1318 (Fed. Cir. 1992).

[8] Link v. Wabash, 370 U.S. 626, 633-34 (1962).

[9] Haines v. Quigg, 673 F. Supp. 314, 5 USPQ2d 1130 (N.D. Ind. 1987); Smith v. Diamond, 209 USPQ 1091 (D.D.C. 1981); Potter v. Dann, 201 USPQ 574 (D.D.C. 1978); Ex parte Murray, 1891 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 130, 131 (Comm'r Pat. 1891).

This matter is being referred to the Office of Initial Patent Examination for further pre-examination processing.

Telephone inquiries concerning this matter may be directed to the undersigned Petitions Attorney at (571) 272-3212.

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